

# DELAWARE

## Nanticoke Tribe of Delaware

State recognized  
Nanticoke  
Sussex County, Delaware

Nanticoke Indian Association, Inc.  
Route 4, Box 107-A  
Millsboro, Delaware 19966  
(302) 945-3400

Land base: tribal ownership of two commercial lots in  
Millsboro, Delaware

### LOCATION AND LAND STATUS

The only land owned by the Nanticoke Indian Association is the two lots on which the Nanticoke Indian Museum and the Nanticoke Community Center stand, in Millsboro, Delaware, in the south-central part of the state. The Nanticokes are recognized by local, state, and federal governments as an Indian tribe; many individual Nanticokes own land in the region.

### CULTURE AND HISTORY

The name of the Nanticoke tribe means "tidewater people"; early history describes them as great trappers and fishers. In the early 17th century, the Nanticokes were living in Maryland, on 3,000 acres on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay. As early as 1678 reservations were created for them by treaty with the Maryland colony. However, their land was overrun by settlers and many Nanticokes moved to Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Canada, and other areas. In 1767 the tribe requested compensation for the land which had been seized, and received \$666.66 from the Maryland colony; in 1853 the Maryland House of Delegates found that this payment was legal and sufficient. In 1903 the state of Delaware enacted the Incorporated Body Act, legally recognizing and acknowledging the Nanticoke Indians living within the state. In 1922 a charter of incorporation established the Nanticoke Indian Association, Inc. Nanticokes live and work throughout the state of Delaware while remaining associated with each other through their tribal organization. The annual pow wow is held in Millsboro the weekend after Labor Day, and the Indian Mission Methodist Church holds its annual Homecoming the first Sunday of October; both of these traditional events draw Nanticokes from all over the United States.

### GOVERNMENT

The administration of the Nanticoke Indian Association, Inc. coordinates tribal affairs.

### AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

The year-round poultry industry is one of the state's largest and employs many individual Nanticokes; others own their own poultry operations and/or farms. Tribal members individually own approximately 1,500 acres of farmland; some grow corn, soybeans,

and rye for sale to the poultry industries. Others grow sweet corn, tomatoes, lima beans, green peppers, squash, pumpkins, cucumbers, watermelon, potatoes, and many other vegetables for commercial sale to retailers and at roadside stands.

### ECONOMY

Members of the Nanticoke Indian Association function throughout the state's economy. Two-thirds of the salary of the curator of the Nanticoke Indian Museum and Indian Village is paid by the state and one-third by the association. A Nanticoke Indian is paid as director of the Indian Elders Center by Sussex County Senior Services, and a Nanticoke director of JTPA programs is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor through the State of Delaware's First State Community Action Agency. Tribal members own farmland, some worked by the owners, and others leased to commercial agricultural concerns. The association states that the great majority of Nanticokes are employed, and that many own small businesses.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The Nanticoke Indian Association plans acquisition of land for tribal enterprises and a permanent pow wow and celebration site.

### GOVERNMENT AS EMPLOYER

The Nanticoke Indian Association pays one-third of the salary of the curator of the Nanticoke Indian Museum and Indian Village; two-thirds is paid by a grant from the state of Delaware.

### TOURISM AND RECREATION

The tribes owns and administers the Nanticoke Indian Museum and Indian Village in Millsboro; the annual pow wow is held in Millsboro the weekend after Labor Day. In the early 1990s attendance reached 40,000 people a year, both Nanticokes and tourists.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

Millsboro is located about 50 miles south of Dover, Delaware's state capital. Major international airports are located in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, each approximately 135 miles from Millsboro. A local airport is located in Salisbury, MD, 35 miles distant. Millsboro is on U.S. Highway 113 and is approximately 15 miles east of U.S. Highway 13. UPS, Federal Express, and other freight and delivery services are available in Millsboro.

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Nanticoke Community Center in Millsboro houses the Indian Elders Center, tribal administrative offices, and state and federal grant programs. There are adult recreational facilities and a children's playground also at the center.

